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WLW
CINCINNATI

FORTUNES WASHED AWAY

1:15
P.M. - E.S.T.

A SERIES OF DRAMATIZATIONS OF BETTER LAND USE.

No. 181

"THE LAND COMES FIRST"

October 11, 1941

ORGAN THEME: DEEP RIVER

VOICE

We took it for granted that land was everlasting;

We said ownership of the land insured security.

Tools would wear out, men would die --

But the land would remain.

ORGAN: ABRUPT DISCORD

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN: DEEP RIVER, behind....

ANNOUNCER

Minnesota -- land of the Rainy River with its historic portages,
land of the glacial River Warren and the Red River and the Saint
Croix -- yes, that is Minnesota. Minnesota -- land of big woods and
lakes, conifers and prairies, black spruce and tamarack swamp, yes,
that is Minnesota. And in the small woodlands you'll find anemone,
lily-of-the-valley, sweet pea, aster, and goldenrod.

ORGAN: HARSH CHORD

ANNOUNCER

And where the hills begin to roll you will find soil erosion!

ORGAN: GENTLE CHORD

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NARRATOR (softly)

May I tell the story of Minnesota?

ANNOUNCER

No! You will only paint the pretty side.

NARRATOR

No, I will tell both sides. But most of all, I want to tell about George and Lester Hass. You see, about six years ago the Gilmore Creek watershed near Winona, Minnesota, was just about done for. Folks said it was bleeding to death. You know what its lifeblood was, too -- topsoil, topsoil running out of the fields into gullies and into creeks and down, down, down, DOWN! and out. The valley was dying. But I started to tell you about the Hass family. Lester was helping his dad....(FADE)

SOUND: Clinking of hammer on machinery...

HASS

Hit 'er right there once more.

LESTER

Dad, she won't go any further. I'll try, though.

HASS

Swing hard.

LESTER

Okay.

HASS (Crying with pain)

Ooo!

LESTER

Gee, dad, I'm sorry. Here, let me....

HASS

You nearly broke my finger, Les...maybe it is...

LESTER

Can I -- here let me.

HASS

It's all right, son. Things like that happen on a farm every day. You'll find that out.

LESTER

Gee, I hope I'll have one of my own some day.

HASS (clearing his throat)

Well, I've been wanting to talk to you about that. Whatever you do -- if and when you get a farm -- take care of the land.

LESTER

Oh, I mean to.

HASS

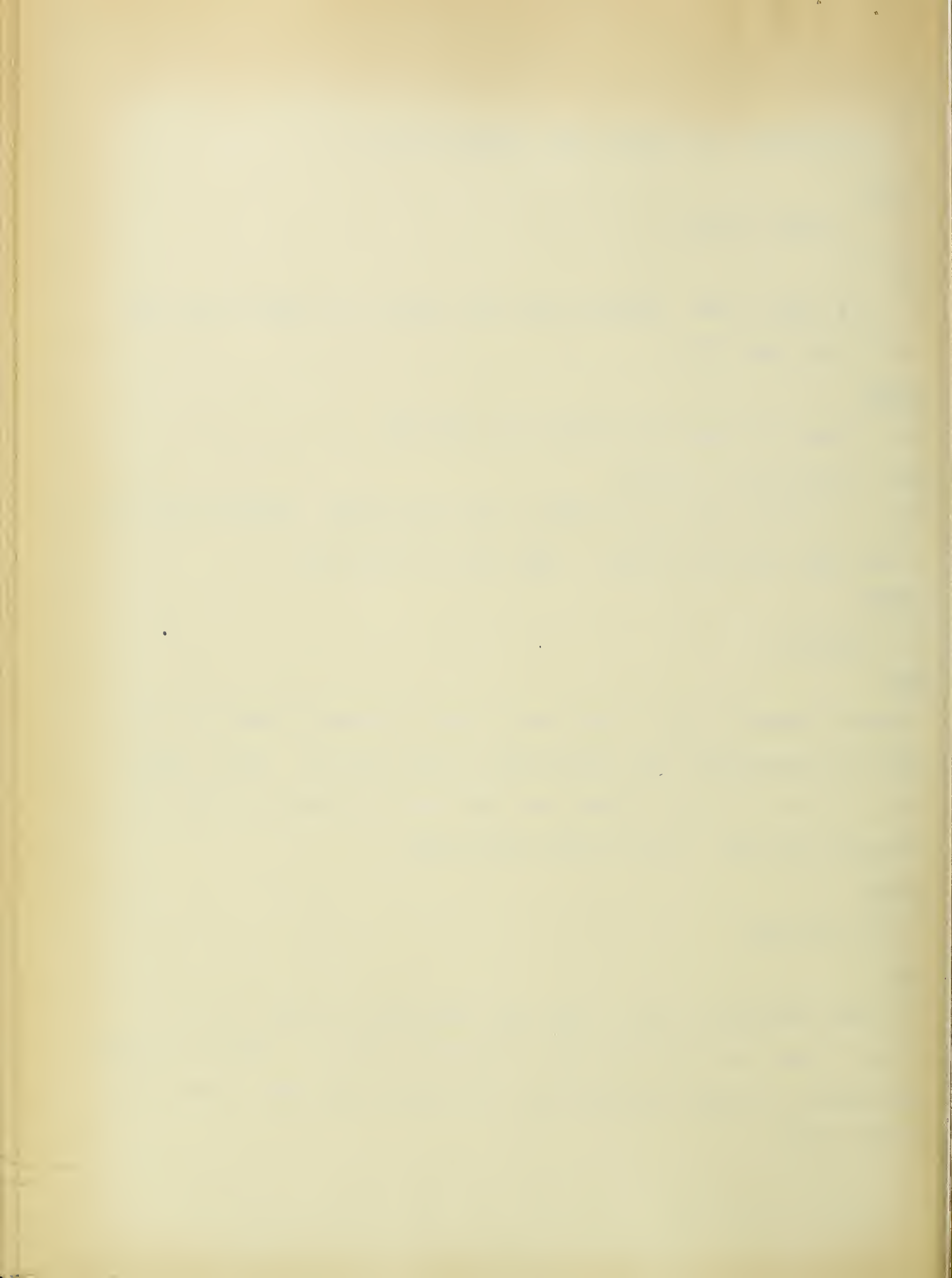
I haven't farmed right, I know that, but I intend to from now on. Folks call Minnesota the "butter-tub of the nation". Well, maybe that's so, but it won't always be that way if we keep letting our pastures run down, or our fields wash away.

LESTER

I won't do that.

HASS

I've been talking to one of the soil conservation men, and he's going to come out and talk over a new plan with us -- mostly pasture improvement, contour cultivation, and things like that. Gosh! This finger hurts.



LESTER

Want me to go up to the house and get some...

HASS

Naw' It won't hurt long.

LESTER (deliberately)

Dad.

HASS

You've got something on your mind.

LESTER

Haven't you?

HASS

Maybe.

LESTER (blurting it out)

I'm going to get married and I want a farm of my own!

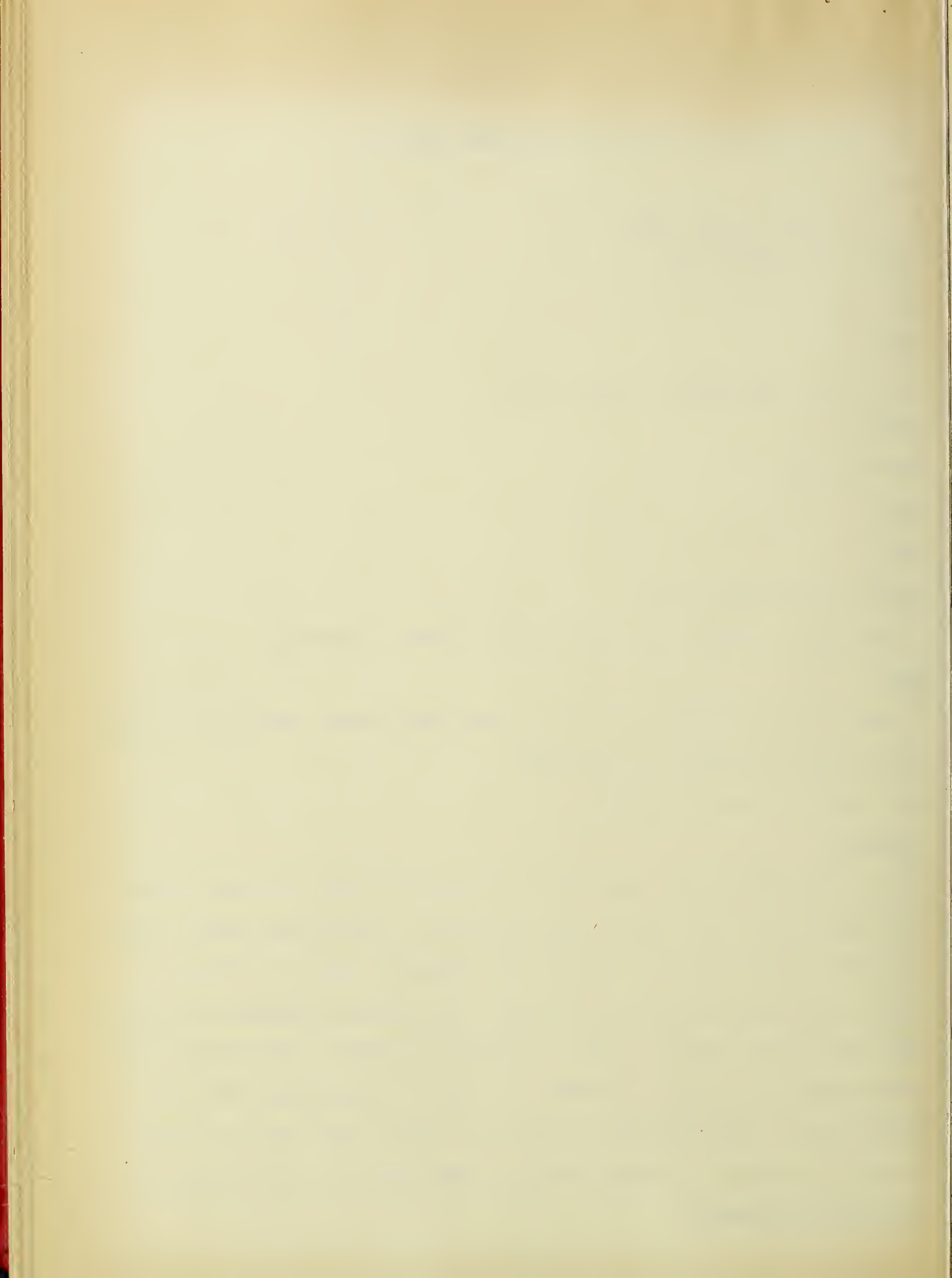
HASS

I know. And I'm going to help you get that farm. As for the girl, you'll have to speak for yourself.

ORGAN: Symbolic music behind...

NARRATOR

Yes, I know Minnesota, and the land and the people around Winona. The Germans and the Czechs organized their orchestras around there. And did you ever hear of James Earle Fraser? Well, he lived in Winona, and he was a great sculptor. You surely remember his statue "The End of the Trail". Why, it stands in almost every museum and every highschool hall. (PAUSE) But here's something maybe you didn't know. Billions and billions of plants and animals died to build the topsoil in Gilmore Valley, down near Winona, Minnesota. (NARRATOR CONTINUES)



NARRATOR (CONT'D.)

The valley was dying. It takes men like George and Lester Hass to preserve that lifeblood. Well, Lester got his farm, got his bride, and when she looked at the new home for the first time...(FADE)

SOUND: Car driving along, comes to halt...

LESTER

There she is, honey, our new home.

WIFE (disappointed)

Oh!

LESTER

You don't sound as though you like it.

WIFE

Well, I wouldn't say that the buildings were any too good. (SUDDENLY)
You understand, Les, I'm not complaining, but...

LESTER

Yeah, I know. The whole place is run down. Renters have plowed up and down hill so long the land has gotten in bad shape.

WIFE (brightly)

But we'll fix it all up! Come on, let's get out!

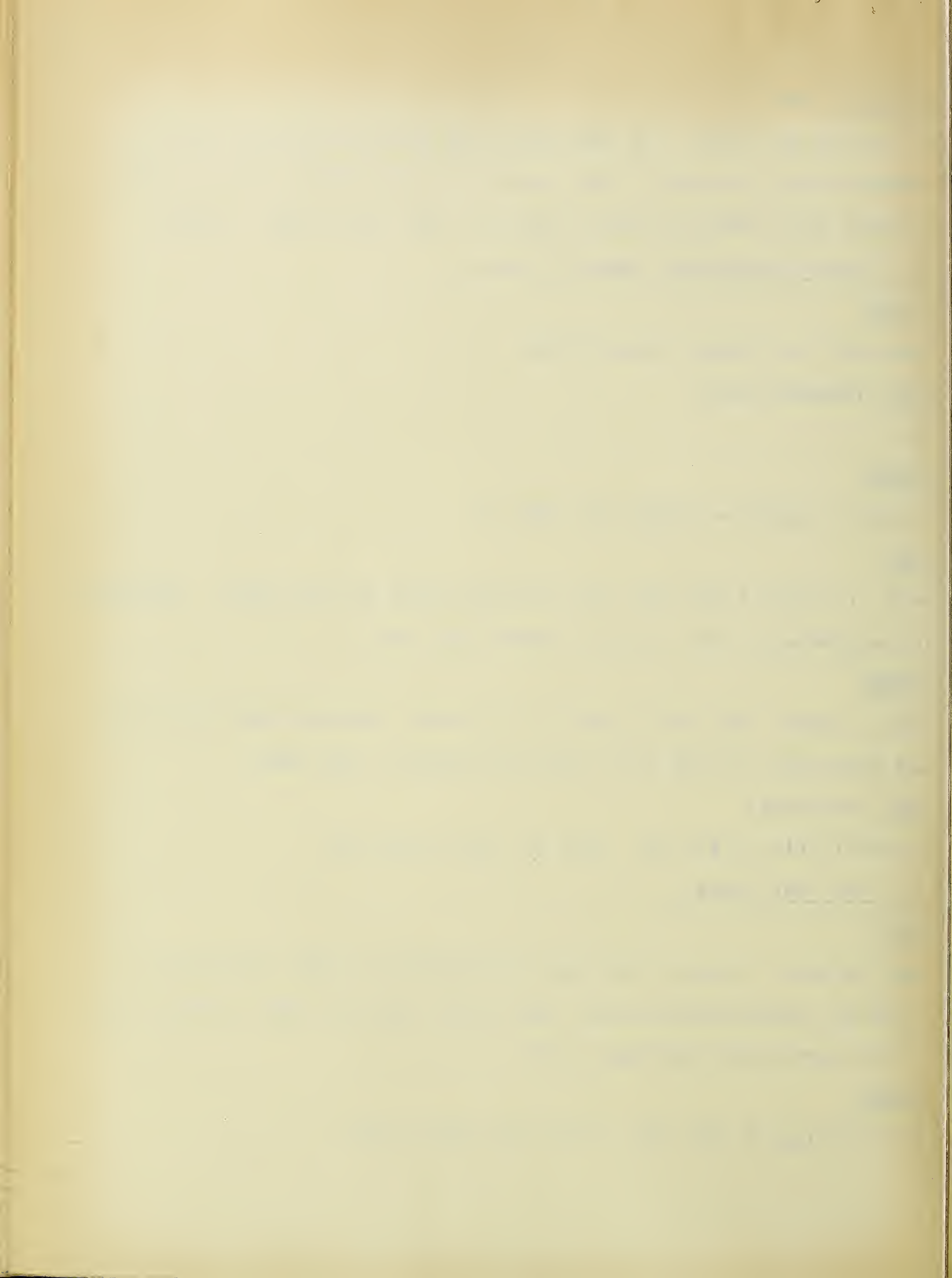
SOUND: Car door opens...

WIFE

Sure we can! I can get the home demonstration agent to help me...
I can put underpinnings under the house, and with some curtains, and a few boards here and there, and...

LESTER

I'm thinking of the land. The land comes first.



WIFE

Of course it does, darling, but we've got to have a home.

LESTER

I don't mean to be rude, honey. I know you'll be taking care of the house. I know it'll be the finest in all Gilmore Valley some day.

WIFE

Oh, it will! Les, I can put some linoleum in there, and...

LESTER

I'm still thinking of the land. I remember something dad told me once. "If we don't protect the land, we won't need the buildings."

WIFE (soberly)

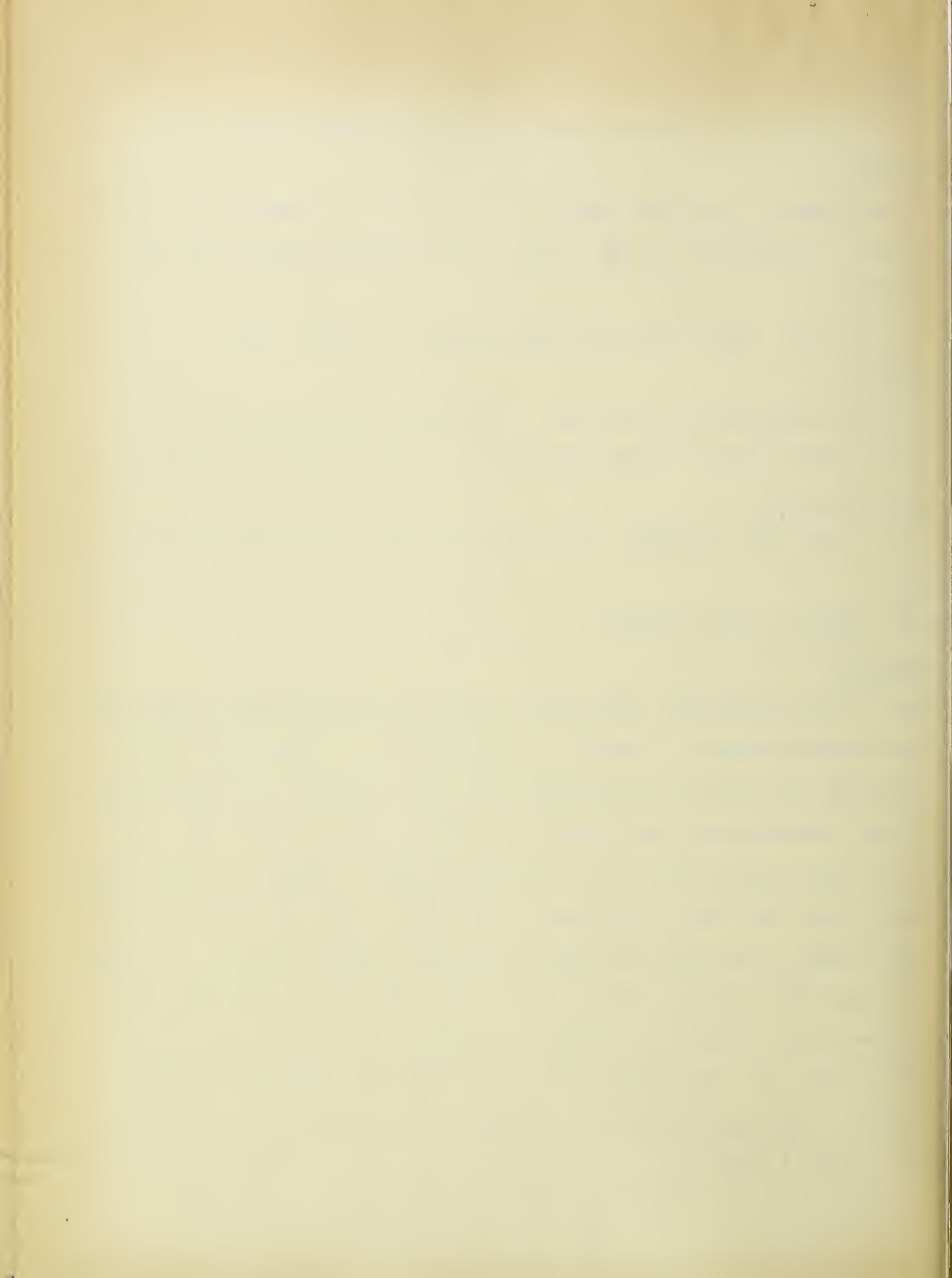
Yes, I see what you mean. And I respect you all the more for it, Les.

ORGAN: Symbolic music behind...

NARRATOR

Yes, I know Minnesota, the Butter State now helping out in the Food For Freedom campaign, I know it around Duluth, I know that Parent-Teachers Associations are helping the rural schools, that the first flour produced there was milled by soldiers of Fort Snelling. And I also know about the soils of Gilmore Valley -- maybe you don't know about them, but they're probably like yours. When the white man first came there, nature had achieved a delicate balance between soil building and soil erosion. Floods were rare. The steep hillsides were covered with trees, the valleys by grasses. The white man changed that. Now, men like George and Lester Hass are changing it back again -- through conservation farming. For example...

SOUND: Night noises...



LESTER

Don't you think you should go in, dear?

WIFE

In a few moments.

LESTER

You'll be going away before long...for awhile.

WIFE

You may too. Your draft number is 70.

LESTER

If my country calls, I'll be ready to defend it. In the meantime, I'll defend it here at home, by raising more eggs, and butter, and poultry, and preserving the land.

WIFE

You know, I got a big kick out of that letter from Glenn Rule the other day, about all the things you've done. For instance, you've built contour fences all around your land.

LESTER

That goes with contour farming.

WIFE

And you've protected your woods from grazing by fencing, and you're rotating your pastures. You've laid out all of the land in contour strips, sowed down alfalfa, spread lime, plugged the gullies, built up a better crop rotation....

LESTER

And I'm going to improve the pastures with more lime and fertilizer. You're a real farmer's wife, dear -- you're getting to know so much about the land, and what it means.

WIFE

That's because it's our life. Oh, I'm so proud of you, Les, for the way you've taken a run-down farm -- land that looked like it might become wasted land, and built it up into a productive dairy farm.

LESTER

There's no reason for anyone to be proud of it. The man that doesn't save his soil is the man to be ashamed. But come -- we'd better go into the house. Something great is going to happen in our lives before long.

ORGAN: BRIEF INTERLUDE.

LESTER

Yes, dear?

WIFE

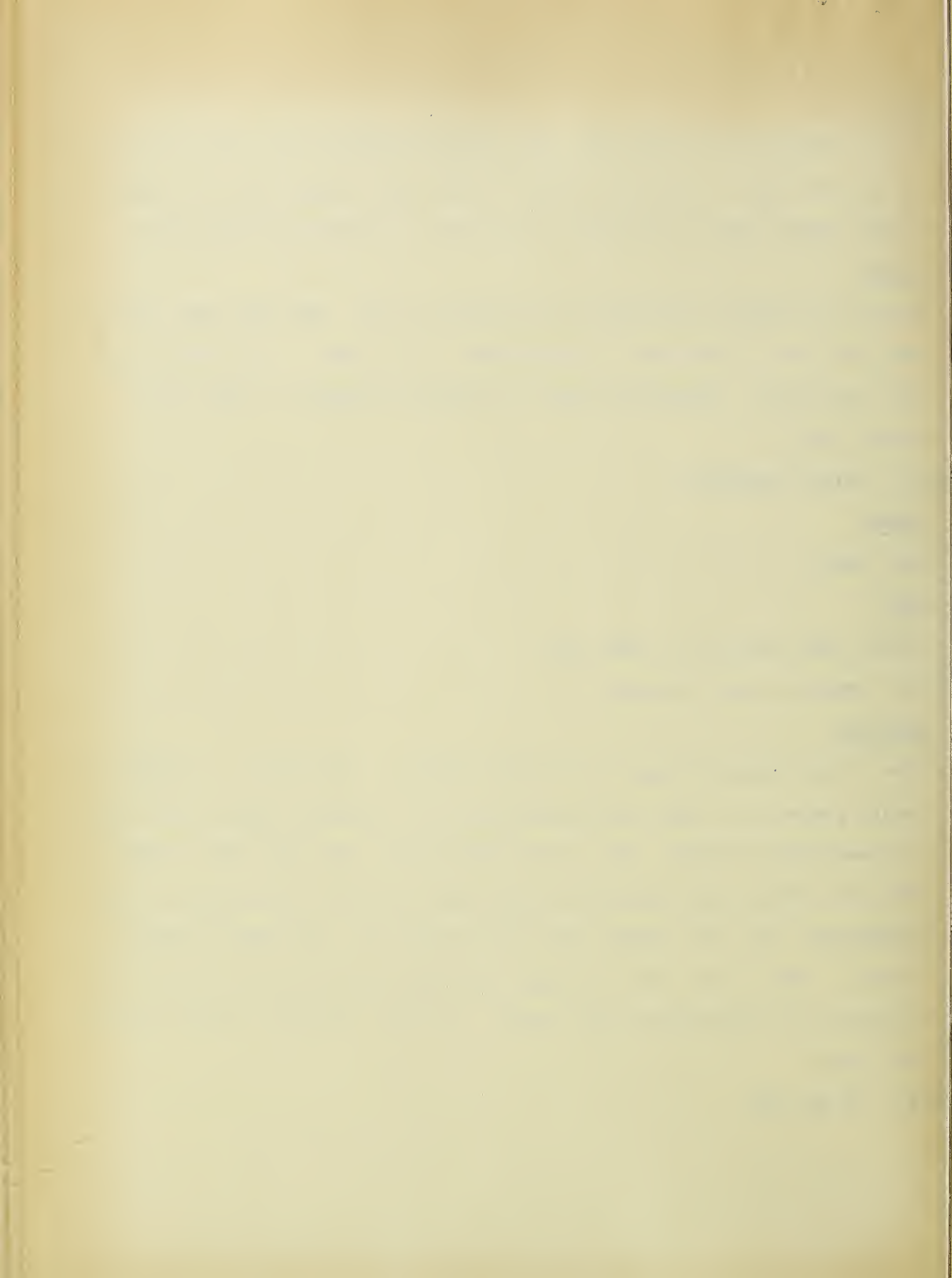
You're the father of a baby boy.

ORGAN: Symbolic music behind....

NARRATOR

Thus, a new chapter began in Gilmore Valley. Who knows -- perhaps in twenty years or so the third generation of the Hass family will have a conservation farmer. Oh, I know Minnesota, with the Twin Cities, with its lovely pink-and-white ladyslipper and its pitcherplant and bunchberry, its iron ranges and stone quarries, its famous medical clinic -- and I know that, through such men as George and Lester Hass, a new era in conservation has begun. It must, because we must defend this land.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.



ANNOUNCER

This story of Gilmore Valley, Minnesota, and one of its typical families has been the 181st consecutive episode of "Fortunes Washed Away". It was brought to you as a part of "Everybody's Farm Hour" through the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and speaking for that group, once again is Ewing Jones.

JONES

(FILLS NECESSARY TIME WITH NEWS ITEMS)

and now, _____ please, the so-called "Eleventh Commandment."

ORGAN: Sneak in DEEP RIVER

ANNOUNCER

"Thou shalt inherit the holy earth as a faithful steward, conserving its resources and productivity from generation to generation. Thou shalt safeguard thy fields from soil erosion, thy living waters from drying up, thy forests from desolation, and protect thy hills from overgrazing by thy herds, so that thy descendants may have abundance forever. If any shall fail in this stewardship of the land thy fruitful fields shall become sterile stony ground and wasting gullies, and thy descendants shall decrease and live in poverty or be destroyed from off the face of the earth."

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

